

GENTLE GIANTS IN NEED
Gorilla Symposium
Zoo Frankfurt, Frankfurt am Main
09. – 10. June 2009



Prof. Dr Manfred Niekisch, the Director of Zoo Frankfurt, called the meeting to order at 09:20 and invited Jochen Flasbarth of the Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Protection and Nuclear Safety (BMU) to welcome the delegates.

Mr Flasbarth explained that the Conference was a contribution to the Year of the Gorilla (YOG) and also marked the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS).

The German government as hosts of the last Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and as the current holders of the CBD presidency had identified three key issues on which to focus:

1. Increasing the Global Network of Protected Areas

The emphasis of the Rio conference was on sustainable use, but pure conservation was an indispensable element. The quality of the areas was important, so they needed to be well managed. Unavoidably this meant transferring financial resources from the rich to the poor. The “Life Web Initiative” would play a role. There were already 18 projects granted in 2008, one of which was called “Sangha Tri-national Transboundary Forests Complex” in the triangle at the borders of the Central African Republic (CAR), Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), which was the home of Lowland Gorillas.

2. Biodiversity and Climate Change

It had been calculated that 25% of the increase in greenhouse gas could be attributed to the deforestation of ecosystems, which stored carbon. Therefore, a proportionate amount of funding to combat and mitigate climate change should be channelled into preventing deforestation. The Congo Basin was a key area for carbon storage and biodiversity, including of course gorillas.

Biodiversity was economically relevant, as Sir Nicholas Stern had pointed out signalling the need to shift policy. Another cost to be taken into account was the price of not taking action. It had been calculated that a single gorilla could generate \$4million in ecotourism revenue, in addition to the species' aesthetic value and vital role dispersing seeds and pruning trees in its ecosystem.

Without peace in the region, the prospects for gorilla survival were not good. This was another reason for the German Government's efforts to support the peace making processes in Africa.

Germany was proud to have been one of the chief instigators of CMS 30 years ago and to have served as the Convention's host throughout its existence. The Convention was a success, doing excellent work on the ground.

3. Public and Consumer Support

Mobile phone users needed to be aware that their telephones contained coltan, a mineral mined in Africa. An alliance of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), including the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) and World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) were lobbying governments to ensure that coltan came from environmentally friendly sources.

In conclusion he thanked all the partners involved in organising the seminar, the staff at BMU and CMS and the patron of the event, Princess Odette Maniema Krempin.

Heiko Warnken of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), deputising for Dr Manfred Konukiewitz, spoke of the link between efforts to combat poverty and gorilla conservation. The destruction of habitats and unsustainable exploitation of natural resources endangered prospects of securing a long-term livelihood of rural populations. The German Government was engaging with governments across central Africa including the DRC.

The rain forests of the Congo were second in size only to the Amazon. They hosted three of the four great ape species. As the forests were the world's "green lung", their overexploitation had to be avoided, while providing for the people that lived there and involving them in conservation and development efforts. The virtuous circle of preserving nature, securing the future of local communities and stopping armed conflicts could be achieved.

A Declaration had been signed 10 years ago in the region, and the Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC) was implementing its terms with the support of international partners, including Germany, which was coordinating communication. Germany was also supporting an integrated conservation project in a National Park in collaboration with the authorities locally.

A major problem was military and political conflict and the resultant pressures on natural resources, such as coltan, wood and charcoal which led to further instability. Germany was working to mitigate the negative consequences of overuse while recognising the need to provide local people with livelihoods. Alternative employment possibilities, such as ecotourism and supporting scientific research were being developed. Long-term investment in schools was being provided and efforts made to stop the influx of arms. The regional agreement to stop illegal exploitation of resources in Rwanda and the DRC brought benefits to both people and flora and fauna.

Climate change and conservation were both factors in sustainable development. The German Chancellor, Dr Angela Merkel had announced more funds for forest projects to be channelled through cooperation agencies. The German experience over the years showed that national governments in Africa had to take ownership and show the political will through adopting laws and enforcing them. Donors and NGOs could not save nature alone without local support.

Prof. Dr. Niekisch said that Frankfurt Zoo was proud and honoured to host the symposium. The previous year, the zoo had celebrated its 150th anniversary. It was involved in conservation work both *in situ* and *ex situ*. The zoo's gorillas were a major attraction and they would shortly have a new enclosure. The zoo aimed to be good for visitors and its resident animals alike, so as to be able to explain conservation issues better. Humans had an obligation towards the apes and to ensure their survival. Zoos were primarily for humans – for education, research and entertainment. Captive specimens of animals acted as ambassadors for their wild colleagues by helping to bring home the fact that animals in the wild were in decline.

Zoos belonging to WAZA had declared that they wished to be at the forefront of gorilla conservation and were therefore participating in YOG. In recognition of the important role played by CMS, celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of its signing in 1979, the not-for-profit organisation, the Friends of CMS, had been established.

Gorillas were a resource, as a potential source of income through ecotourism.

It was also important to strive for peace, as without political stability saving the gorillas was considerably more difficult. The continuing loss of biodiversity was one cause of civil unrest and poverty, while our climate and biodiversity were at the root of a plethora of activities and needs, although the interconnection was not always evident at first glance.

He welcomed the assembled experts and looked forward to working on the “Frankfurt Declaration”. He also recalled the first time he had seen wild gorillas in Rwanda when he made the professional and emotional commitment to the species. He thanked BMU, the German Nature Conservation Agency (BfN), CMS, colleagues at the Zoo and the Friends of CMS for their assistance.

Christof Schenck of the Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS) added his welcome to the participants. To the best of his knowledge this was the first ever Gorilla symposium to be held in Germany and certainly the first such event during the YOG.

Germany had played a prominent role in CMS from the outset. More recently, Germany had also hosted CBD COP9 and fully recognised its responsibilities for biodiversity. The FZS willingly agreed to join YOG when invited. In the 1960s FZS started its work in Virunga, providing ranger equipment, vehicles and planes and building ranger posts. The work of habituating gorillas to humans only ceased when FZS’s continued presence was made impossible because of the war. FZS had though returned to carry on its cooperation with local agencies. The main aims of the event were to learn from each other’s experience, identify the most pressing issues and develop new actions.

The Gala event on Wednesday evening would bring together representatives of the business community, celebrities and other VIPs. It was expected that ZDF, the German public broadcaster would cover the event. The symposium had attracted high-level political attention and the Chancellor of Germany had sent a personal message.

Mr Schenk’s final appeal was that ours should not be the generation, which drove the gorilla into extinction.

John Mshelbwala, the Chair of the CMS Scientific Council, recalled when CMS was debating the inclusion of all gorillas on its appendices at COP8 that

some felt this action was hasty and not all populations were migratory. However the decision to go ahead had been vindicated by events. CMS requested the Royal Belgian Institute for Natural Sciences to draft an agreement and accompanying action plans. Negotiations over the Treaty were completed in 2007 and it came into force in 2008. Its first Meeting of Parties took place in Rome in 2008 immediately prior to the CMS COP.

He called on the four Range States that had not yet ratified to do so and reminded the countries involved of the need to nominate a representative to serve on the Technical Committee. He hoped that the Symposium would lead to a Frankfurt Declaration and a set of complementary, parallel actions. He concluded his remarks by stating that sustainability and good governance went hand in hand.

Melanie Virtue (Inter-Agency Liaison Officer, CMS), deputising for the Executive Secretary Robert Hepworth, acknowledged that the symposium had brought together most of the key players involved in the struggle to ensure the gorilla's survival. She listed the man-made threats to the gorilla that exacerbated natural dangers like disease. She stressed that gorillas and the forests had a symbiotic relationship. Both needed each other – for food and shelter and as seed dispersers.

She too urged the four remaining governments to sign the Agreement, which had the support of partner organisations like GRASP and WAZA who were both also involved in the Year of the Gorilla. YOG had a huge outreach potential. Artists and authors had willingly lent their names to the campaign, which had also recruited leading conservationists like Jane Goodall, Guy Williams and Ian Redmond.

TOPIC SESSIONS

Topic 1 Mining

Prof. Dr Niekisch opened the thematic sessions by calling on Prof. Dr. Raimund Bleischwitz (Wuppertal Institute) to speak on the topic of mining. He was followed by His Excellency Jean Claude Kibala, the Vice Governor of the South Kivu Province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Prof. Dr. Raimund Bleischwitz (Wuppertal Institute) - Coltan Mining in Central Africa

Coltan (tantalum) has properties that make it suitable for high-tech products - cars, electronics (mobile phones, pagers and computers), ICT, optics, medicine and chemistry. Demand is likely to increase. Global players in Coltan production include Australia (53%), Brazil (22%) and China. Africa (Burundi, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe) also has strong position in the market.

According to the UN the DRC exported US\$20 million worth of tantal in 2008. Prices, steady at US\$28-34/p in the 1990s, peaked at US\$220/p in 2000/1, before falling to current rates of US\$30-36/p. Four factors lead Coltan to aggravate conflict: (i) huge profits (high market price coupled with low extraction and transportation costs); (ii) failing states with poor property rights; (iii) weak international monitoring; and (iv) interaction with arms embargo violations.

Artisanal mining is carried out in the Congo basin, with many actors in the production chain: diggers, *négociants*, *comptoirs*, trading companies, international companies, and the processing industry). In the DRC two armed groups illegally trade Coltan: Congrès national pour la défense du peuple (CNDP) and Forces démocratiques de la libération du Rwanda (FDLR).

Today only one company buys Coltan from DRC. All five top export companies (Group Olive, Etablissement Muyeye, MDM, World Mining Company and Panju) are DRC-owned but may have European shareholders. *Comptoirs* trade in controlled areas belonging to or cooperating with these top five (possibly pre-financed by trading companies). *Négociants* buy from mines controlled by the two armed groups (usually pre-financed by *comptoirs*). There are two export Coltan trade chains. The legal one licenses operators nationally and internationally and the Coltan is documented. The illegal trade finances armed groups, and it also includes the trading companies, *comptoirs* and *négociants*. Many *comptoirs*

knowingly purchase from areas controlled by armed groups, violating the arms embargo. This raises the question how the Coltan is documented.

Mining generates high export income, boosting GDP in the DRC, offsetting reduced revenue from other key exports during the world economic downturn. With average daily income of less than US\$1, there is a clear incentive to work in the Coltan trade with the price of a kilogram at US\$18. The UN estimates that the FDLR is reaping millions of dollars from the mineral trade.

Gorillas are valuable tourist attractions. This can help their protection. Tours operating 200 days a year with eight tourists charged \$500 each would generate \$800,000 p.a. With a 40-year life expectancy, each gorilla in a family of eight would “earn” US\$4 million. In Rwanda, gorilla tourism earns US\$7 million per year.

Natural resources are essential to the dynamics of war in Central Africa. Short-term counter measures include developing maps of mineral-rich zones and armed groups to raise awareness, certificating the trade and enforcing the arms embargo. Medium-term options include fair contracts, sectoral agreements, the creation of a resource fund to finance other activities (e.g. nature protection), and the promotion of sustainable forestry, agriculture and eco-tourism.

In 2005, the UN Security Council promised to take action on the link between natural resources and armed conflict. In 2006, Resolution 1653 was adopted, calling on the governments of the DRC, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi, to promote lawful and transparent use of natural resources.

H.E. Jean-Claude Kibala, Vice-Governor of South Kivu in DRC.

The Parc National de Kahuzi-Biega began in 1937 as the *Réserve zoologique et forestière du Mont Kahuzi*. It became a National Park in 1970 and was extended in 1975. It was included in the UNESCO World Heritage Sites in 1980 and added to the endangered list in 1996 due to poaching and overexploitation.

The Park is home to 13 species of primate, 9 antelope species and 400 bird species. The primates include *Gorilla gorilla graueri* of which there are only 3,000 left in the world, threatened because of human pressures. One of the aims of the National Park is to protect the gorillas and their habitats.

Other detrimental factors are the aftermath of war and unauthorised human settlements, which disrupt migration routes. The Park is occupied by bands of foreign militias, with devastating effects on tourism, and poaching of all kinds is prevalent. The authorities lack the capacity and infrastructure to combat poaching effectively; for example, they cannot patrol the lakes at night and the long borders of the country are porous. There are human pressures - 800,000 people live in the park and their demand for wood for fuel has an adverse impact on the forest. Industries extracting minerals also operate in the Park, opening the forest up through building road and no remedial work is undertaken when operations stop. This industry should be subject to a system of certification, but this would require international cooperation.

Unrest means that the Park's infrastructure has been neglected and is in decay. The assistance of the German Development Cooperation Agency is greatly appreciated.

Raising awareness of the importance of the Park to the economy – not least its potential to bring in foreign currency earnings – might alleviate the situation. Security has to be improved through regular patrols. Local inhabitants have to be offered alternative livelihoods and the foreign militias removed.

Immediate actions required include addressing energy needs, reforestation and the development of appropriate agricultural and pastoral activities. Security is paramount – the Park needs properly equipped ranger stations, the removal of human settlements and tourism should be promoted. Rwanda has shown the value of controlled tourism with limited numbers of visitors, bringing benefits to people and gorillas.

Topic 1 - Q&A and Discussion

Ian Redmond pointed out that in 2001, the Gorilla Organisation and Born Free had conducted a study of the coltan industry during the boom and a separate Canadian study had showed that it was possible to identify the source of minerals because ore from different mines had a different “fingerprint”. He thought that a certification system could be developed, and the companies involved would be able to operate it.

The Durban Process for Ethical Mining had brought all the key players together but progress had stalled, and there was insufficient interest on the part of the producers.

He also recounted the story of being offered some coltan by a taxi driver in Brazzaville.

Radar Nishuli was familiar with the mines within the National Park for which he was responsible. There were no officially recognised works. The industry was artisanal. It was impossible to assess the threat posed by coltan to conservation when there were no maps showing where the mines were. The position was similar across the DRC where mining was going on in several National Parks.

The question was raised whether the industrialised countries were supporting the Durban Process and certification. It was estimated that 80% of coltan in the DRC came from conflict zones. The industrialised countries should boycott illegal sources exactly as they did with diamonds.

On the question of eliminating arms, the view was expressed that imposing an arms embargo was not the solution. The rebel groups were well organised and could evade embargoes. If the sale of illegal coltan were addressed, the rebels would lose the revenue, which enabled them to purchase weapons. The rebels were similarly profiting from illegal trade in ivory.

The Vice-Governor mentioned the role of the world community. The FDLR troops were too numerous for local forces to handle alone. The DRC needed an international commitment to deal with them through a UN mission. Massacres were not uncommon and were not restricted to illegal mineral extraction. The National Park wardens were not adequately equipped to defend themselves or tackle the rebels. Rebel leaders should be targeted by denying them visas restricting their entry into other countries.

Matthew Hatchwell (WCS) asked whether there was any possibility of replicating the EU mechanism, which encouraged legal timber to stop illegal logging, for the mining of minerals.

Dr. Sandra Altherr (Pro Wildlife) asked whether there had been any consequences for the ninety international companies suspected by a panel of experts in 2002 of having violated guidelines, either through them being taken to court or agreeing to stricter best practice advice.

Robert Kasisi (University of Montreal) stressed that the benefits of ecotourism were marginal compared with the short-term profit available from mining. A new mechanism to involve local populations and the companies was required. In DRC, he suggested comparing areas where minerals were being exploited by legitimate international companies creating jobs and providing social infrastructure and other regions like South Kivu with no licensed industries. The question was whether young people in regions like South Kivu were joining the militias.

Hans Schipulle (Germany Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development) referred to a labelling system developed under the EU, which had been discussed at the G8 summit in Heiligendamm. The scheme had been set up so as not to penalise the legal producers who cared for the environment. The German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development would further develop a certification scheme.

Answers:

H.E. Vize-Governor Jean-Claude Kibala was not aware of any consequences for companies arising from the 2002 expert report. The companies accused were not operating in the DRC. Some Belgian companies had promised not to buy from the DRC without certification, but when minerals were bought in other countries, there was no guarantee that the country of origin was not the DRC because of smuggling.

Criticism of the DRC for being too flexible because of the need to attract investment from outside (e.g. from China) was not justified because no licensed Chinese companies operating in the country were under suspicion.

Low-skilled mining jobs provided by local companies caused most environmental problems. South Kivu was mainly agricultural and its one industrial firm ceased operations in the 1990s. No new companies had moved in, because of security concerns.

The authorities would welcome legitimate companies because of the tax revenue they would generate, but the activities of armed groups were a deterrent, posing a threat to commerce and civilians alike. Countries further along the chain were making more profit from mining than the DRC was. **Prof. Dr Bleischwitz** agreed that peace and security and disarming the FDLR rebels were top priorities. The DRC's armed forces bore the brunt of the struggle with rebels even with the presence of the MONUC troops.

"Finger printing" was not as easy with coltan as it was with timber. The presence of coltan in the end product was often difficult to detect. "Naming and shaming" companies engaged in dubious practices sometimes simply led to them changing their names or restructuring and carrying on as before. H.C. Starck, a large capacitor producer, had withdrawn from South Kivu because of the security situation, and would like to return but would only do so when circumstances improved. Companies could be regulated through national legalisation and the rules applying in stock exchanges.

Embargoes were not an easy solution. It would be better to bring small-scale operations under the law and make them more sustainable and interweave them with agricultural practices.

Prof. Dr Niekisch summarised the session, identifying certification, employment opportunities (especially for the young), dealing with the FDLR, international involvement including the UN and developing sustainable electronics as the main themes.

Topic 2 Energy/Deforestation/Forestry

Prof. Dr Niekisch announced a third speaker **Matthew Hatchwell** WCS Europe in addition to the two advertised, and called upon **Stefan Opitz** of the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) to speak.

Stefan Opitz German Technical Cooperation (GTZ): Energy

The Albertine Rift is a biodiversity and endemism hotspot with 5,800 plant species, 1,000 birds, 400 mammals (39% of all African mammals), 34 of which are endemic. It has the highest population density in sub-Saharan Africa—more than 300 people/km².

Approximately 95% of household energy comes from biomass, mainly firewood and charcoal. Another problem facing this region is political unrest. There has been civil war over the past 20 years, with fighting in Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda and eastern DRC.

The Kahuzi-Biega National Park is home to the eastern lowland gorilla (*Gorilla beringei graueri*). Nine gorilla families (116 individuals) live there, together with over a million human refugees. Much of the Park is in the hands of militias. There are also many artisanal miners, who hunt for food, pollute the rivers and cut trees for charcoal. Another major problem is agricultural encroachment, which leads to massive deforestation.

The Virunga National Park is also in the Albertine Rift and is home to many of the world's remaining mountain gorillas (*Gorilla beringei beringei*), whose total population numbers only 700 individuals.

Energy for the Kivu region comes mainly from the Virunga National Park (90% of the charcoal used in North Kivu comes from the Park). The charcoal business is valued at US\$30 million/year, and the Congolese army and armed militia reap most profits. Agricultural encroachment up the mountains is a problem here too, destroying gorilla habitat. Militias and soldiers also participate in poaching and charcoal production. Deforestation has an impact on humans as well as gorillas, compounded by political instability and insecurity, and a vicious circle ensues. As there is little electricity, no gas, solar or other niche energy carriers, charcoal will remain the main energy source.

There are political solutions, however. These include improving political, legal-regulatory, administrative and societal framework conditions.

There is also a value chain approach, which depends on the adoption of a legal framework to secure land tenure, transfer ownership, and create a differential taxation scheme and favourable investment conditions.

A threat to national parks is high demand for land from people living in permanent and semi-permanent settlements. Energy supply plans have been elaborated for the main urban areas and camps. GTZ has long experience in different fields along the value chain and on other levels, such as biodiversity and forest conservation in Congo, and in forestry, sustainable forest management and household energy worldwide.

Olof Freiherr von Gagern then spoke of his experiences with the Danzer Group, a timber and veneer producer, working in the Congo Basin, where they managed large areas of forest in both the Republic of the Congo (IFO) and the DRC (SIFORCO).

Olof Freiherr von Gagern - Danzer Group

The Danzer Group is the second largest producer of decorative hardwood veneer in the world, and a large producer of hardwood lumber in North America and Africa, owning 3.2 million ha of forest concessions in Africa, 1.16 million of that certified to FSC-standard. It also has 20,000 ha of sustainably managed forests in North America.

Danzer has operated in West and Central Africa for more than 50 years; in the DRC since 1972 and the IFO (Republic of Congo) since 2000. Within the DRC, the company has rules such as selective logging (0.2 to 1 tree per ha), makes long term investments and transfers know-how to local industries, and supports social programmes.

In the IFO, the Danzer Group is committed to forestry management, securing the cooperation of the local population, the government and NGOs. The company has a management plan, which includes an inventory of flora and trees, a socio-economic study and a wildlife inventory. Gorilla protection is part of the forest management plan.

Based on inventory of indirect signs (e.g. nests), gorilla density can be calculated. Results show the lowland gorilla population in Ngombé and the neighbouring National Park Odzala-Kokoua to be high, with 3-4 gorillas per km² and that gorillas prefer forests with many herbs in the undergrowth.

The human presence creates negative influences on the gorilla population. In the north, one

negative effect is urbanization and high human population. Indirect negative impacts such as logging should be prevented, as should hunting and access by hunters from new roads.

Danzer has implemented many wildlife protection measures. In areas with a high gorilla population, they have declared zones where hunting is prohibited. They have also implemented a wildlife project with WCS, strictly protect certain species, allowing only subsistence hunting of non-protected species, and implemented active anti-poaching control by eco-guards. Danzer has undertaken monitoring programmes as well, for example of the evolution of gorilla populations, the impact of harvest, the presence of Ebola, of the functioning of the eco-guards and of hunting pressure.

Government, NGOs and the IFO are subject to many constraints. Irregular funding constitutes a major problem. High consumption of bush meat suggests local administrations do not enforce hunting legislation, which means poaching remains a problem. The IFO does provide benefits to populations that abide by sustainable regional development.

National Parks depend on public finance, and park budgets are only funded partly or intermittently, so poaching continues to be a problem. Parks and eco-tourism produce a relatively small contribution to job creation, economic development and national income, but even so the Congo basin should be delimited into conservation and productive forest areas.

Matthew Hatchwell (WCS London) spoke about the effects of logging in the Republic of the Congo and particularly about the road networks.

Matthew Hatchwell (WCS London) – Logging in the Republic of Congo

Uncontrolled forestry has caused secondary problems, one being that roads open up the forest, bringing short-, medium- and long-term problems for wildlife.

The road network in the Republic of the Congo has grown considerably recently as a result of timber exploitation. The state of elephant populations is clearly worse in areas with roads built for the logging industry than in areas with no roads. The long-term effects of logging roads on gorillas are unknown

As 80% of forests are in concessions (and therefore 80% of the wildlife), it is necessary to enlist the support of the companies. Proper use of land use planning rules is another tool.

Concessions should be exhorted to reduce carbon emissions. This is important in countries like Gabon to reduce or even avoid degradation. The tax regime and offsets should be used

to ensure that high conservation value areas are spared.

Forest governance has to be improved, as promoted by FLEGT (Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade), including implementation of land use plans.

Topic 2 - Q&A and Discussion

Tim Christopherson (CBD) asked how the speakers saw the challenges and opportunities of including forestry in the climate change debate. He would be involved in the CBD-FAO World Forestry Congress in October 2009, where wildlife and bushmeat would be discussed and he agreed to convey the Frankfurt Declaration to the meeting.

Dan Bucknell (Gorilla Organisation) reported that fuel-efficient stoves were being distributed and the early results were promising. One indicator of success was complaints from charcoal sellers of reduced sales. More details of the project had been submitted to the YOG website blog. The stoves not only helped protect gorilla habitat, they also reduced carbon emissions and ought to be included in emissions trading.

Klaus Lengefeld (GTZ) asked what authority private companies had to patrol the roads as this seemed to be a task for government agencies not the private sector.

Roland Melisch (TRAFFIC International) asked the speakers for their reaction to decision 6 adopted at the 44th ITTO council regarding guidelines on wildlife.

Hannes Jaenicke (independent filmmaker/ZDF) asked if he could send a film crew to observe and record Danzer's operations in Africa.

David Morgan (WCS, Lincoln Park Zoo) pointed out that there was evidence that commercial exploitation of the fruit trees upon which gorillas depended was beginning to have a detrimental impact on the apes and asked for comments.

Mr. Opitz said that he was not fully conversant with REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation in Developing Countries) but hoped that the UNFCCC conference in Copenhagen would produce good outcomes but there seemed to be still some work to do. He noted with interest the comments about using fuel-efficient stoves within the National Parks. Registering a micro-project would involve clearing several bureaucratic hurdles in the carbon exchange programme.

Olof Freiherr von Gagern responding to the question about the role of private companies in securing roads recognised that his company was not a law enforcement agency and did not seek to usurp this role. The company did finance guards, managed by WCS. The local authorities remained responsible for enforcing the law and taking action against criminals. He supported incentives for companies to adopt better practices. His company had stopped using diesel to generate electricity and now 30% of its power requirements came from steam driven generators, which were better for the environment. Danzer would be happy to let its operations be filmed, as this would allow a wider public to see the real conditions on the ground.

Pasteur Matthieu Yela Bonketo (*Cercle pour la Défense de l'Environnement*) asked whether the community was benefiting fully from Danzer's operations when local people were not consulted in the planning stages. In practice, planning and regulation in the DRC started after operations had begun.

Dr. Sandra Altherr (Pro Wildlife) asked what Danzer did to prevent its employees from hunting for bushmeat and whether alternative sources of food were being provided.

Stefan Ziegler (WWF) drew attention to a Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) project in Virunga. Governments provided insurance for larger scale projects, so he wondered whether similar support could be provided for smaller projects in troubled areas.

In response, **Olof Freiherr von Gagern** pointed out that the situation in DRC and the Republic of the Congo were different. In the latter, there were no large population centres in the area where Danzer was operating. The questions also highlighted the limits of what private companies could or should do. Danzer sought cooperation with the relevant local authorities. Governments should adopt zoning policies allowing sufficient areas of land for agriculture alongside timber concessions. Problems would be avoided if such policies were in place at the outset. Danzer and WWF were prepared to discuss such planning with the authorities. His company always established a management plan in advance. In DRC, the war had set things back, but the company was again working on management plans.

The company was patrolling its roads with eco-guards to counter the illegal bushmeat trade. Roads no longer in use were closed down, while public roads were monitored, as these were the main routes for bushmeat from the forests into the cities. More guards would make the work more effective.

On the question of insurance, it was often the case that one instrument designed for one set of circumstances did not lend itself to adaptation for other scenarios. However, **GTZ** had spoken to the German supermarket chain, REWE, about offsetting its bio-products.

Topic 3 Hunting

Prof. Dr Niekisch introduced **David Greer** (WWF) to open the topic on hunting.

David Greer - Great Apes Programme WWF - Bushmeat Commerce and Gorillas: a Recipe for Extinction

There are many reasons why we should protect gorillas but the main ones include their genetic affinity with humans, the way they provide insight to evolution and emergence of modern humans, their importance as seed dispersers, the way they promote understorey growth by letting light through the forest canopy, and the fact that they are a flagship species.

Gorilla population trends have been poor, with a 60% decline in the last 20-25 years, with a further 74% decline in the last 10 years. Estimates show it will take as long as 75 years for the species to make a full recovery.

Gorillas face many dangers, and each different species has different threats. The *Gorilla beringei* faces such threats as political unrest, habitat loss, disease and poaching. The *Gorilla gorilla* faces these and more, including bushmeat trade, habitat degradation by extractive industries, disease, population pressure, pet trade and traditional practices, made worse by poor law enforcement. Illegal hunting (poaching) is the single most significant controllable threat facing gorilla populations today.

Potential solutions to help sustain and boost the gorilla population are numerous. Some of the most important measures include better law enforcement, education and awareness campaigns, capacity building, employment, debt relief for conservation, responsible eco-tourism, greater efficiency of the justice system, commitment to international agreements, improved data collection, storage and analysis, alternative protein sources/improved animal husbandry, improved business practices, increased collaboration, and continued financial support.

On a final note, Mr Greer said that he was looking forward to taking his son to see the gorillas, not in a zoo enclosure, but in the wild.

Prof. Dr Niekisch introduced **Dr Roger Fotso**, the Director of the WCS Cameroon Programme. He spoke on hunting and the bushmeat trade in Central Africa.

Dr Roger Fotso, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) Republic of Cameroon - Bushmeat

The hunting and bushmeat issue in Central Africa is complex because of ethical dilemma between conservation and supporting livelihoods. The current rate of harvest of wildlife for meat is unsustainable. As a result populations of species are going extinct. The impact of even low levels of hunting of gorillas can be huge because they are slow-breeding and long-lived.

The current scale of hunting and trade is immense—1 million tons/year (equivalent to 4 million cows). This means about 6,250 gorillas are hunted per year for their meat and other products. The maximum sustainable production of wild meat from tropical forests is 102 kg/km²/year, a sixth of the current level.

The impact on ecological integrity Central Africa is manifold. Species populations are being reduced and extirpated, and their loss affects the wider biodiversity of forests. Many keystone species are hunted resulting in dramatic changes to ecosystems.

In the past hunting had occurred at sustainable levels, so it never posed a problem. Today, however, more factors impinge on the forest: increasing human population density and decreasing forest area, the increasing use of modern transport; more infrastructure, opening the forests up to hunters, and allowing wildlife products to be transported rapidly and cheaply to a larger market. Civil strife causes a collapse in wildlife protection systems and leads to the ready availability of firearms. The lack of security exacerbates instability and undermines law enforcement. Theoretically, gorillas are fully protected, so any hunting and trade is illegal, and international trade is prohibited under CITES, but the ability of the authorities to enforce the law is patchy.

Bushmeat also plays an important role in rural life. It is a vital source of protein for people providing between 30-80% of people's needs. It is also a major critical source of income, as 54% of the take is sold.

Bushmeat and hunting increase in times of unemployment, illness, crop failure and civil strife. Controlling commercial bushmeat trade is essential and much of the wildlife harvested involves non-threatened species and can be sustainable. In urban areas, consumption of wildlife is more of a luxury trade and tends to involve threatened species more. Allowing the local sale of non-protected species while stopping long distance trade to urban centres is one way of increasing sustainability, as experience in Malaysia has shown.

There are many alternatives to the use of bushmeat. These include animal husbandry, consumption of wild caught fish, and rearing wildlife species in farms. The only viable option, which is sustainable in the long term, is developing an alternative domestic source of protein.

Summary

Solutions to the problem of bushmeat and hunting and their impact on threatened species include having effective protected areas, establishing wildlife-friendly management systems in logging concessions, controlling long-distance transportation, implementing law-enforcement in urban centres and developing sustainable funding mechanisms for such efforts.

Topic 3 - Q&A and Discussion

Peter Pueschel (IFAW) asked first, given that law enforcement was a major problem in Africa, whether there were any more initiatives in the pipeline along the lines of the Lusaka Agreement. Secondly, he asked how large a problem was legal as opposed to illegal hunting. Legal hunting often targeted the prey species of endangered animals with indirect consequences. Finally he asked whether timber companies had guidelines on hunting in the forest and on providing alternative sources of protein to their workers.

Abou Bamba (Ramsar) first explained his presence as the representative of the convention on wetlands (gorillas needed water). He informed the symposium about a workshop for the judiciary held in Abidjan which Ramsar and other MEAs had organised. A similar workshop was planned for judges in Cameroon. Judges and the police benefited from improving their knowledge of international treaties and how to enforce them.

Boris Thiemig (BOS - the Borneo Orang-Utan Survival Foundation) asked whether any coordination of effort was being organised on the part of the industrialised countries.

In summary, **Prof. Dr Niekisch** expressed concern that NGOs and companies were assuming roles better suited to governments.

In reply, **David Greer** confirmed that in his view, it was for governments to enforce the law. NGOs could provide technical and financial support. WWF had proposed a plan for judicial follow-up with a protocol to be drawn up by a Working Group. Cases should be monitored as they progressed through the courts and any loopholes and bottlenecks should be identified.

Roger Fotso suggested that there could be a regional response to law enforcement, coordinated through bodies such as COMIFAC or through multilateral arrangements such as existed between Cameroon, the Central

African Republic and the Republic of the Congo. In Congo Basin states, there were legal hunting safaris, which usually specifically excluded protected species. The aim was to ensure that any hunting was sustainable.

Freiherr von Gagern, replying to the point concerning the role of the logging industry, explained that his company brought live cattle for slaughter on site for its workers, avoiding or reducing the need for bushmeat hunting. In some places, hunting was the norm, but this was usually by use of guns, rather than snares, which were often indiscriminate and caught non-target species.

Ian Redmond welcomed Danzer's strong stance. He accepted that Danzer was not a law enforcement agency but he pointed out that some oil companies had made illegal hunting a sacking offence.

He stressed the need to understand that the forest was more than just trees. The forest ecosystem included the gorillas. Reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation was important, but the forest had no future without the gorillas to prune leaves and disperse seeds. Protecting gorillas went beyond animal welfare concerns, the forests, and their role as carbon sinks, depended on the gorillas' survival.

One speaker expressed concern about the frequent reference to gorilla's genetic proximity to humans, which he thought was an emotional approach rather than a scientific one. He pointed out that other animals also had a genetic make-up very similar to humans.

Chouaibou Nchoutpouen (COMIFAC) intervened in response to the question about regional structures and explained COMIFAC's coordinating role on deforestation and measures to implement CBD. COMIFAC was a model, which other sub-regions might follow.

Matthew Hatchwell (WDS) stressed that governments in the region were not the only bodies with responsibilities. A study conducted across European

airports showed that large quantities of bushmeat were being brought in and it was assumed only a small proportion of bushmeat was being detected. The authorities in Europe appeared to be turning a blind eye to the issue.

Topic 4 Diseases

Fabian Leendertz

Fabian Leendertz (Robert Koch Institute; Max Planck Institute Leipzig)

Humans and great apes are closely related, sharing 98% of DNA, which means both species are susceptible to the same pathogens. Great apes are “immunologically naïve”. Research and ecotourism creates proximity and increases the risk of disease transmission.

Human diseases to which great apes are susceptible include polio, measles, scabies, anthrax and ailments of the respiratory system. The simple act of entering the forest could potentially lead to contamination and infection passing to the gorillas.

Researchers and tourists alike can wear masks when in the proximity of great apes. It is also important to be healthy and vaccinated, and leave nothing in the forest (no spitting, etc.). One of the easiest things to do is just keep one’s distance.

What is needed to help keep the great apes disease free is minimum standard hygiene rules for all gorilla sites, health monitoring, disease investigations, and investigation of the origin infection.

In conclusion, there need to be permanent health infrastructure at field sites, a link between fieldwork to laboratory expertise, as well as more investigations, which will lead to more knowledge and better preventative measures.

Patricia Reed, field vet for WCS

The Wildlife Conservation Society, based at the Bronx Zoo, New York, works in 60 countries. It seeks to deliver long-term and sustainable projects and programmes. Dr Reed herself lives in the Congo, where one of her principal preoccupations is the fight against Ebola haemorrhagic fever.

Ebola is a horrible disease, with symptoms including influenza-like fever, diarrhoea and bleeding. There are five strains of the disease, with no vaccine and little effective treatment other than palliative, supportive care. Reservoirs of the disease are asymptomatic forest hosts including fruit bats, and other species for which it is fatal. Some dogs and monkeys have developed antibodies, and wild pigs in Asia are proving to be of interest to scientists

Transmission to humans results from direct contact with the reservoir or with animals, which had such direct contact. In humans the disease is highly contagious and it is assumed that this also holds true for apes.

It is suspected that Ebola was the cause of dramatic local declines of ape populations (as much as 90%), coinciding with outbreaks of the disease among humans. Gorilla carcasses found nearby were tested and it was established that they had the virus.

The number of carcasses confirmed to have Ebola is low, and other diseases such as anthrax are also present. The forests are large, remote and difficult to explore, and when carcasses are found, they are sometimes badly decomposed. Large-scale surveys are planned every four years in Gabon and Congo. Local inhabitants and hunters are asked to report carcasses and some are trained to collect samples safely. This reporting system means that scientists can often reach a carcass within 24 hours. Reconnaissance surveys are undertaken in 18 km squares, thereby covering thousands of square kilometres systematically.

Samples collected are sent overseas for accurate analysis, but if results are needed quickly, laboratories in the country can be used. A new test using faeces gives clear results as to whether Ebola is present.

Ebola is a major human public health issue. Human cases could be prevented through education. The Government supports the wider conservation efforts, appreciating their relevance to the human health problem. Conservationists too need to be mindful of not doing harm when trying to make a positive contribution.

Topic 4 - Q&A and Discussion

Fiona Maisels (WCS Gabon) pointed out that one third of all gorillas in the world were to be found in one timber concession so might now be exposed to Ebola.

Kerry Bowman (University of Toronto) asked whether there was any explanation for the peaks in outbreaks and whether there was any historical

evidence to suggest that similarly serious outbreaks were happening 100 years ago.

Patricia Reed explained that the virus had only been identified in 1976, so there was little historic data that could be matched to the virus. Pygmies related stories of wildlife die-offs coinciding with human outbreaks. There were triggers, but so far no evidence to suggest that climate change was one of them. Even though the forest was being opened up, cases of direct human contact with the virus's reservoir were not common.

Fabian Leendertz confirmed that we still did not know what the causes were. The virus might be totally new brought about by other ecological factors. An important change was the reduced numbers of gorillas. Current populations living in a limited number of National Parks were not well placed to withstand losses running into the thousands.

Melanie Virtue (CMS) asked about the current state of vaccine development, whether any were already at the trial stage and how they would be distributed. Another questioner pointed out that thousands of people were dying of malaria and HIV, so research into rarer diseases was competing with more pressing diseases.

Roland Melisch (WWF) asked about requirements for reporting outbreaks of diseases either to the WHO or national health authorities.

Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka (Uganda) stressed the importance of community education and combating people's beliefs that diseases arose from witchcraft.

Dr Thomas Breuer (Republic of Congo) asked whether any comparison had been made between gorillas in the heart of National Parks and those on the edge with greater exposure to humans and whether gorilla antibodies were similar to humans'.

Fabian Leendertz said that few studies had been undertaken on the last question. Some studies showed that apes on the edge of National Parks had similar pathogens to humans. There was little data on the development of antibodies. **Patricia Reed** said that no studies had been carried out in the remote part of the Republic of the Congo where she worked.

With regard to vaccines, two initiatives were under way and they were cooperating with each other. A dozen vaccines were being developed for humans. The two leading had NGO involvement had reached the stage of human trials. They were effective on laboratory primates. One was for injection and the other was to be taken orally. Some safety issues still had to be cleared.

In the experience of NGOs, government health authorities welcomed their interest in combating animal disease especially where there were risks of human infection. There was little evidence of competition for resource allocation between malaria and Ebola for example.

There were considerable efforts being made to influence community behaviour and deal with traditional beliefs. Education campaigns were being undertaken by organisations such as International Conservation and Education Fund (INCEF) using local professionals. There had been no human epidemics since 2005, so the message not to touch ape carcasses was clearly getting through.

Topic 5 - Armed conflicts

Robert Muir and Helga Rainer

Robert Muir

There is a high degree of overlap between countries experiencing conflict and those considered biodiversity hotspots. Of the 10 Gorilla Range States, only Gabon had had no serious war in the period from 1950 to the present.

The Virunga National Park has a great many species, volcanoes, swamps and various other habitats, but another recent feature is war. Various militias and rebels from the Congo and Uganda are present: Mai Mai (1,500), CNDP until 2009, FDLR (2,000), NALU (2,000) and FARDC (10,000). Some had been brought back into the mainstream and deactivated, but alliances break down. All in all, the Park is a large, dangerous and difficult area for rangers to operate in.

The Park, a UNESCO site, has been the scene of conflict, with national armies pitted against rebels and local civilians. Rangers suffer particularly badly in the course of doing their job and hundreds had died in the course of duty, the equivalent of one every 6-7 weeks. Others have been wounded and incapacitated. Both the Park Infrastructure and personnel are targeted, as on occasions so are the gorillas, as reported in the world media.

Recently, 25 elephants have been killed for their meat by underpaid, ill-disciplined and badly led regular troops of the Congolese army. The ivory had been sold and is thought to have been shipped out through Uganda. The hippopotamus is now listed by the IUCN. It used to number 29,000 in the Virunga, but has been reduced to a few hundred. Mai Mai on one occasion killed so many that the river turned red with blood.

While conflict destroys habitat and watersheds, so too does excessive charcoal production. Hundreds of thousands of people rely on charcoal as a fuel, and the militias engage in its production and trade.

Refugee camps in the National Park are home to over 1,000,000 displaced people. NGOs providing aid have done well to provide the basics (shelter, water, food) but refugees go to the forest for wood for fuel. This is disastrous for the future integrity of the forest. This is coupled with the human disaster of sex slaves and torture.

With no tourism, there is no means of paying the rangers trying to save the forest. They are not adequately equipped to counter hundreds of militia, and they take their life in their hands when they try to do their job.

Topic 5 - Q&A and Discussion

The first intervention from the floor highlighted the fact that in all four of the previous topics, armed conflict was mentioned, suggesting to the speaker that the principal topics could be reduced to three: ecotourism, diseases and

conflicts. The questioner asked how practical the solutions being proposed against the backdrop of armed conflict were. All the good work being achieved was being undone by rebels. If the symposium were to produce tangible results, then the focus needed to be placed on conflict, the recurrent theme underlying many of the other topics. The key question was why there were so many armed groups in the region, and it was clear that direct confrontation was not an easy solution, because conflict led to more widespread damage. Peaceful means needed to be found to resolve conflict through dialogue, and peace talks were being brokered. However, without the rule of law, conservation policy could not be implemented.

Dominique Zirimwabagabo Bikaba (Pole Pole Foundation) questioned the wisdom of Westerners visiting a war zone as tourists. In reply, **Robert Muir** acknowledged that unbelievably some such cases did occur. There was no guarantee that the revenue generated did not find its way into rebel hands.

Thomas Breuer asked whether in her studies, Helga Rainer had done a comparison between rebel activity in protected and non-protected areas, on the basis that rebels might prefer to operate in remote areas.

Robert Muir admitted that achieving peace would not be easy. Complex problems needed a multi-disciplinary approach, and there were immediate physical dangers. There were also risks in not undertaking anything. Agencies charged with seeking or imposing solutions needed to have clear mandates. Armed responses to conflicts were not always successful, but sometimes governments were reluctant, or even refused, to negotiate with foreign groups, as was the case with the Rwandans who had been implicated in the genocide. The UN had to intervene and if possible persuade the parties to negotiate.

Helga Rainer admitted that there might be other variables in the equation. She had concentrated on identifying whether the National Park was a factor in rebel activity and if so how important a role it played. It was clear that conflict

was a regional rather than national problem and it was a phenomenon crossing national borders.

Justus Tindigarukayo-Kashagire (Ministry for Tourism, Wildlife Conservation and Museums and Monuments, Uganda) picked up Robert Muir's comments about licenses issued by Uganda allowing Congolese ivory to be smuggled out. He asked for sight of the evidence and confirmation that it had been passed to the authorities in the DRC. He stressed that several countries in Africa had signed up to the Lusaka Agreement to collaborate against illegal trade.

Liz Macfie (Consultant in Great Ape Conservation /IUCN/SSC Primate Specialist Group) expressed her admiration for NGOs and their commitment in adverse conditions. She conceded that even some rebels saw the potential for ecotourism as a source of revenue when peace was eventually restored.

Radar Nishuli confirmed that violence was a daily occurrence in the Virunga and Kahuzi-Biega National Parks and all along the eastern border of the DRC. Both parks were UNESCO World Heritage sites and the DRC had committed itself to protect them, but peace and stability were prerequisites. There was a precedent in Kosovo where the world community intervened to secure peace, so the same should be done for Africa. People, resources and biodiversity were all at risk, and the national authorities needed assistance.

One questioner asked what the causes of the war were. He suggested the lack of democracy, the desire of those in power to cling on to it and bad governance. Africa should develop some home-grown solutions and not simply call for help from outside. He also thought it was a forlorn hope to expect rebels not to exploit the forests. The environment was not the only problem; there were other humanitarian concerns competing for resources. The prime source of conservation problems seemed to be the conflict and the Congolese army was unable to expel the FDLR rebels. Conservation actions needed to take this into account. Helga Rainer said that conservationists

needed to stress the importance of the environment and natural resources. A compelling case could be made.

Responding to **Dan Bucknell** who had asked about the after effects of army operations against the rebels, **Robert Muir** said that the FDLR had been disrupted by a coordinated offensive campaign. The FDLR had moved and regrouped in the Virunga National Park, where they had committed reprisal attacks, burning down houses where they thought local populations had helped the Congolese army. The former CNDP group had now rejoined Congolese army and was conducting operations in the Kahuzi-Biega National Park.

It might be true that guerrillas did sometimes revere gorillas, and there was evidence that gorilla populations actually rose in the 14 months of the guerrillas' presence, and some other key species also survived the conflict but there were associated disadvantages; the presence of rebels attracted attacks from government troops; human rights violations increased and more displaced people went into the forests.

In summary, support for the environment needed to be brought into the mainstream in concert with UN peacekeeping and humanitarian missions. Longer-term environmental concerns had to be integrated with the immediate programmes for food and shelter.

Topic 6 – Ecotourism

Praveen Moman

Praveen Moman - The No 1 Gorilla Safari Company

It is possible for there to be a sudden shift from conflict to tourism. The No. 1 Gorilla Safari Company has existed for 12 years. While sadly, in the case of the DRC tourism has not brought peace, but it did help in both Rwanda and Uganda, where the company is trying to encourage tourism. At least two of the three States around the Virunga National Parks are

doing well.

The Albertine Rift divides the DRC from East Africa, and is one of the most beautiful places on Earth. The No. 1 Gorilla Safari Co. is developing circuits in Rwanda and Uganda, and hopes to be able to do so one day in the DRC.

Wealth is created by business and not through aid. The Company is managed by local people, drawing from all the nationalities in the region. Empowerment of staff and local communities are important factors. It is looking for new business models for Africa, not based on the savannah safari. The Gorilla is an iconic species: weddings can use gorillas as a backdrop.

The availability of some resources in the region is a challenge. Services can be rather basic and not in keeping with some tastes. The Company seeks partnerships and is involved in a project with the UK's Department for International Development to build the tourism sector after the conflict.

The lodge area is surrounded by a buffer zone. The first lodge is high in the mountains near the three-country frontier, but is not yet being used for excursions to the DRC.

Summary

The Parks with their gorillas offer a world-class product, so visitors would come if a proper service were offered.

Tourism can be made to work even in difficult territories, although the right conditions have to be created to attract the private sector, and it offers a better alternative than illegal activities.

H.E. Hon Serapio Rukundo the Minister of State for Tourism, Wildlife Conservation and Museums and Monuments of Uganda and Member of Parliament for the Kigezi region, where the Bwindi National Park is located.

H.E. Hon Serapio Rukundo – Uganda, the Pearl of Africa

Ecotourism in Uganda has made a positive contribution to the wellbeing of gorillas and people alike.

Uganda is quite a small country with an area of 236,000 km² (similar in size to the United Kingdom), 15% of which is inland water. The climate is mild because of the altitude, which ranges from 620m to 5,110m above sea level. The country is the source of the River Nile.

11% of all bird species are found in Uganda, as are 7% of mammals. Over half of the world's mountain gorillas live there.

The historic political structure of the country is complex as it included kingdoms, chiefdoms and republics. Upon independence in 1962, the country became a republic.

The Ugandans are a hospitable people and the tourism industry is booming. Revenue is growing by 32% per annum and tourist arrivals in 2008 were up by 311% compared to 2001, an annual growth rate of 39%. A major destination is the National Parks, in part because of the gorillas, and the Parks are consequently benefiting from increased receipts. Local communities also benefit with infrastructure, investment and employment, with an estimated 80,000 tourism-related jobs.

There are challenges: degradation and erosion of habitats; diseases passing from humans to animals and vice versa; habituation of gorillas; the impact of infrastructure; excessive expectations by local communities demanding too much; negative travel advisories; and the "credit crunch" and global downturn.

Strategies are being put in place: policy guidance is being formulated and political support is being canvassed. Tourism is expanding into other areas – the Nile, the mountains and Lake Victoria – and there is also faith-based tourism, the Slave Trail and the historic forts along the Nile. Local communities can be won over by explaining the benefits and addressing human and animal conflicts and other problems (such as animals like elephants destroying crops).

Summary

Ecotourism benefits animals and people. Local communities participate in a sector, which offers a unique experience and the opportunity for international cooperation among the Range States and organisations like CMS.

Topic 6 - Q&A and Discussion

Dr Martha Robbins (Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology) said that much of the emphasis in tourism was placed on the eastern countries in

the range, with no tradition of gorillas being taken as bushmeat. Elsewhere, ecotourism made negligible amounts of money in comparison to the oil industry (e.g. Gabon and Equatorial Guinea).

One speaker suggested that the Minister had painted too rosy a picture of Uganda where there were also some armed conflicts and parts of the country were not safe for visitors. The same speaker also asked whether the pygmy populations were really stakeholders or were they only marginal beneficiaries.

A Representative of GTZ said that ecotourism would never be the sole source of employment. He asked whether any studies had been carried out to determine who really benefited from ecotourism. He was aware of figures for the United Republic of Tanzania showing the percentage of tourist expenditure that stayed in the local economy.

Gerard Dick (WAZA) had been to Uganda and visited the “impenetrable forest” which no longer lived up to its name. He said it was important to ensure that natural assets were conserved for the animals and ecotourism.

H.E. Hon Serapio Rukundo replying to the question on the security situation in Uganda explained that re-establishing peace was a laborious task. He pointed out that at the time that the building hosting the symposium was built, Emin Pasha was still taking slaves. The power station at Owen Falls constructed by the colonial powers was only now being replaced. He recounted the political history of post-independence Uganda and the instability, which arose when leaders were more concerned with their grip on power than with developing the country for the people. Uganda’s rebels found refuge in Sudan and the DRC.

With ecotourism, a great deal of the purchase price of the holiday stayed in the country of the tourists’ origin, but still a fair amount was spent in the destination. Uganda was aiming at quality tourism rather than mass tourism.

Other industries might bring greater profits, but all contributions to the economy were welcome.

The Government was investing in building infrastructure, with consequential benefits for tourism. In its early days, the National Resistance Army (NRM) government assigned top priority to security. After Uganda became secure, the next priority was energy through hydroelectric plants. Roads were now the main focus. Reliable power and good roads would both benefit tourism.

Praveen Moman felt that governments were taking tourism seriously. He himself preferred a market approach. Still more could be done. He accepted that ecotourism would remain a relatively small market and would not challenge the oil industry in countries like Gabon. Tourism was not without disadvantages, but on the whole it was a positive factor.

Close of First Day's Business/Organisation of the Working Groups

The following day's business would begin at 08:30 and the six thematic working groups would start drafting their contributions to the declaration at 09:00. The plenary would reconvene for two sessions at 11:00 and 14:30. The six thematic Working Groups would be chaired by Mining: **Jean Claude Kibala**; Deforestation: **Stefan Opitz**; Hunting: **David Greer**; Disease: **Patricia Reed**; Conflict: **Robert Muir** and Ecotourism: **Minister Rukundo**. There would be one further presentation by Radar Nishuli on the eastern Gorilla.

Aline Kühl (UNEP/CMS) explained how the Frankfurt Declaration would be drafted and finalised. She pointed out that the Declaration would have a preamble and operative sections and she requested that any calls for action should be as specific as possible and key players should be identified. Participants were invited to make written submissions to any Working Groups that they would not be able to attend in person.

Prof. Dr Niekisch thanked the participants and the translators for their hard work and announced that the next day's plenary would be chaired by Ian Redmond.

Gorilla Symposium 10 June

Ian Redmond in the chair called the plenary session to order. He invited **Radar Nishuli** of the *Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature*, (ICCN) to make his presentation: "Les efforts de conservation des gorilles de plaines orientales au parc national de Kahuzi-Biega (PNKB)". The Park covered habitat that was home to both Mountain and East Lowland Gorillas.

Radar Nishuli (ICCN)

Complementing the Vice-Governor's earlier presentation, the presentation proposed some solutions to the DRC's well-known problems.

The DRC has sixty protected areas. The Kahuzi-Biega National Park has been increased from 600 to 600,000km². but the war led to it being placed on UNESCO's World Heritage list in danger. The threats include the presence of rebels, poaching, violation of the corridors, invasive *sericostachys* plants and encroachment by human settlements and agriculture.

Gorilla numbers have dropped from 258 to 100 in the mountains. Because the lowlands are inaccessible due to the presence of guerrillas, gorilla numbers there are not known. Elephant numbers have collapsed to just two.

The ICCN has adopted a vision, a grand strategy with nineteen sub-plans. It is being supported by German agencies.

The National Park has been divided into 4 sub-sectors. Rangers are able to patrol 30% of the area, and this helps monitor the gorillas, but the ICCN lacks staff and many rebels are in the Park. The gorillas in the Park had been counted (there were 118), and it was known that one has recently died of old age and a set of twins has just been born.

Awareness raising campaigns are bringing local communities on board, as they are seeing the benefits. Local committees have been established to foster partnerships to assist with agriculture and health care. A leaflet for children has been produced.

Considerable amounts of outside help have been offered, from organisations such as Born Free, Berggorilla, Prague zoo, GTZ, which all complement internal self-financing mechanisms based on sustainable tourism and Public-Private Partnerships

Q&A:

It was stated that while mining created many jobs, gorillas did not. This question needed to be addressed and people persuaded that conservation was important. Mining was both profitable and an important employer. The National Park was involved in building schools and clinics, but these charged fees, so the local people needed employment to be able to pay for the services.

A representative of the mining ministry said that he wanted to establish cooperatives, bringing together small-scale operators, to encourage them to leave the Protected Areas. It was easier to deal with them collectively than individually.

Dan Bucknell (Gorilla Organisation) said that the Durban Process was doing exactly what was being suggested: developing alternative livelihoods and encouraging moral and ethical mining. There were problems: finance and finding new sites, and of course security. Artisanal mining was dangerous because of poor safety procedures; proper pit props were rarely used.

Matthieu Yela Bonketo (DRC) asked about how the commitment of local people was achieved.

Radar Nishuli explained that this was accomplished through the establishment of committees. Some National Parks were not as good at opening themselves to local communities as others and as a result there was not such good cooperation. As soon as actors at all levels were involved and felt that they had “ownership”, momentum could be built. **Ian Redmond** pointed out that

there were many active NGOs whose help could be enlisted. Private-Public Partnerships had also worked well on the ground, with examples cited in Senegal and the DRC. They were sometimes hampered by lack of finance but they often came up with good innovative ideas

In conclusion, **Ian Redmond** said that he had found it touching that David Greer intended to introduce his child to the gorillas. Ian Redmond had done the same thing himself and he hoped that the National Park would soon be back on the tourist trail as it had been in 1983.

Ian Redmond made a presentation entitled “Save the Gorillas to Save the World”.

Ian Redmond - “Save the Gorillas to Save the World”.

Many people’s knowledge of apes is based on the work of Dian Fossey and television documentaries, and some may have heard of Titus, the silver back from the Volcanoes of the Virunga.

It is easy to demonise hunters, but they face a life and death struggle themselves, even though they kill animals known by first name to the scientists.

The “end game” of conservation has been reached. The last vestiges have to be protected at all costs if the species is to survive in the wild.

Sanctuaries help to protect individual specimens and representative samples of habitats have to be preserved, but biodiversity cannot be treated like a stamp collection.

Gabon has moved rapidly from having no National Parks to establishing a wide network within a country, 90% of which is covered by forest. Across the Congo Basin, retaining a 10-15% level of forest is not sufficient to provide the necessary ecosystem services.

Gorillas are important for the forest as seed dispersers, and gorillas are the only species to eat the tips of certain plants, pruning them in the process and to open up the forest canopy. Many seeds need to be partly chewed and digested to germinate, and success rates among eaten seeds is often much higher than uneaten ones.

More gorillas live outside protected areas than in them, and many local inhabitants depend on bushmeat to eat and sell. The health and education of children depend on hunting, and belief in traditional medicine persists.

GRASP has reported on the effects of infrastructure and calculated that by 2030 only 1% of the great ape habitat will be unaffected. To avoid deforestation, money from carbon markets should be used, via the United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (REDD). Excessive hunting contributes to the degradation of forests, as the animals are integral to the system but the effects of their reduced numbers often take longer to become apparent.

Animated weather graphics clearly show the rainfall in the Congo Basin. This rainfall is vital for continuing stability of existing weather systems. Forests are not ornaments, and more than the 15% coverage is needed. The projected 4°C increase in temperature will leave much of Africa as an arid desert and while the aviation industry is responsible for 2% of greenhouse gases, deforestation in tropical forests has an equivalent effect of 18%.

Frankfurt Declaration

Dr Christiane Paulus (BMU) explained the procedure to be followed for the adoption of the Frankfurt Declaration. The results of the discussions in the Working Groups would be put on screen and the Chairs would be given five minutes each to highlight the salient points. Because of time pressures, the debate would not be reopened but any comments from the floor would be minuted for inclusion in the record. The Declaration would not contain the names of the participating organisations. The final version would be printed, distributed and translated in due course.

Mining: in the absence of the Working Group Chair, **Dan Bucknell** (Gorilla Organisation) presented the results of the mining group's deliberations. Minor amendments were adopted to make clear that fingerprinting referred to minerals and to take account of the fact that while all mining was illegal in the DRC's national parks, this was not the case in Uganda. The Declaration contained a recommendation that there should be no mining in gorilla habitats. The section referred to mining rather than all extractive activities because of the remit of the Working Group.

Deforestation: **Stefan Opitz** (GTZ) reported on a fruitful and lively debate, which had been enhanced by written submissions too. The group had attempted to reduce the length of the draft and moved text from the preamble to the operative paragraphs. The need to address customer countries was stressed.

Hunting: **David Greer** (WWF) pointed out that his group had changed the title of its topic and had added reference to the accountability of Range States and NGOs. A reference to developed countries had been added to the preamble and greater emphasis had been placed on the trade in live animals.

Diseases: **Dr Trish Reed** had led a small but knowledgeable group. Some suggestions for minor changes to the wording had been accepted for the sake of greater clarity. The group had attempted to identify some priorities. The group had also discussed the ethics of prophylactic interventions and education, particularly with regard to local communities and zoonotic diseases communicable between humans and animals.

Armed Conflict: this group had been chaired jointly by **Helga Rainer** and **Robert Muir**. The main message was that the international community had to recognise that habitat destruction was a crime against humanity. The UN had to involve itself with efforts to end conflicts in gorilla habitat and widen its mandate to cover the environment, for which there were precedents. Other Conventions covered the international aspects of the destruction of culture and commodities (e.g. the World Heritage Convention and the Hague Convention) but national aspects also had to be addressed. The bravery of the park wardens working in difficult conditions was applauded. Reference should also be made to the rebel groups and the need to try to find a diplomatic solution to the conflicts. Some objected to the direct reference to MONUC, preferring reference to the UN in general.

Ecotourism: **Minister Rukundo** described the make-up of the group, which had included a politician, scientists and tourism operators. Communities were often sceptical towards outsiders and needed to be won over. Tourism and conservation had to go hand-in-hand and had to be sustainable. With an equitable sharing of the benefits, a win-win situation could be achieved.

The final draft would be reviewed and edited to delete repetition. The final draft would be edited in consultation with the Chairs of the Working Groups chairs. In principle however, the symposium was content to adopt the Declaration. While the Declaration did call on outside entities to take action, it was just as important for the participants in the symposium to take the lead. They should use the Declaration as best they could to further the aims of gorilla conservation with other ministries, other MEAs and other NGOs.